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Resources mobilization and enabling environment for poverty eradication in the context of the implementation of the Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries for the Decade 2001-2010

Statement submitted by Rotary International, a non-governmental organization in general consultative status with the Economic and Social Council

The Secretary-General has received the following statement, which is being circulated in accordance with paragraphs 30 and 31 of Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31.

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* E/2004/100.

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Rotary is an organization of business and professional leaders with over 1, 200,000 members. In over 31,000 Rotary Clubs in 168 countries, and united worldwide providing humanitarian service and helping to build goodwill, peace and international understanding.

Rotary has consistently supported and participated in the UN system since the Charter Conference In 1945, wher 49 Rotarians in 29 delegations contributed to write the Charter, and where Rotary was one of the 42 original NGOs. Five of the first 12 General Assembly Presidents were Rotarians.

Further, Rotary was an instrument in helping the founding of UNESCO, having convened in London in late 1943 a meeting of Ministers of Education and in the writing *of* the UNESCO Charter in 1846. Rotary and UNESCO have recently signed *61* letters *of* encouragement for increased cooperation at the local level around the world.

Rotary has general consultative status with ECOSOC and has now appointed representatives to ECOSOC Commissions, viz. ECA, ECE, ECLAC, ESCAP, and ESCWA.

Rotary has special NGO status with WHO, UNICEF, and UNFPA.

Rotary has representatives to UN bodies in New York, Geneva, Vienna, Paris, Rome and Nairobi and also with the AU, the OAS, the World Bank and the Council of Europe, Rotary's top philanthropic goal is to eradicate polio worldwide by the organization's 1OOth anniversary in 2006. Since Rotary launched its PolioPlus program in 1986, Rotary members have helped to immunize more than 2 billion children in 122 countries, and contributed more than US$ 500 million to the effort. In addition, Rotary raised an additional US$ 18 million in one year during its second major funding drive in 2003. Besides raising and contributing funds, Rotary has provided an army of volunteers who have donated their time and personal resources to assist during national immunization campaigns.

Rotary's community-based leadership, volunteer support and initial funding for the oral polio vaccine were the catalyst for the World Health Assembly's resolution in 1988 to eradicate polio. Spearheading partners of the, Global Polio Eradication Initiative are the World Health Organization, Rotary International, US. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and UNICEF.

Great progress has been made. In 2003, less than 1,000 polio cases in six countries were reported all year, down from 350,000 cases estimated in 125 countries in 1988.

The Rotary Foundation of Rotary International is the largest source of privately funded International scholarships, The ambassadorial scholarships program allows for 1,300 young adults to serve as youth ambassadors and study at *8* college or university of another country. Youth exchange allows for 7,000 secondary school students to visit or study in another country under the Youth Exchange Program. The program provides opportunities for students to experience first-hand life, culture and education in another country.

The Rotary Foundation has partnered with eight renowned universities in seven countries to establish the Rotary Centers for International Studies in peace and conflict resolution. The centers offer master's-level degree programs in conflict resolution, peace, studies, and international relations.

Rotary also works on programs and projects with UN bodies in some cases, on water and sanitation, poverty eradication, hunger and nutrition, disaster relief, illiteracy, education for all, the aging and older citizen, the disabled, drug and substance abuse, HIV/AIDS, and other diseases, and various environmental projects in its "Preserve Planet Earth" program.

Rotary representatives have attended all the 1990's Development Conferences, the World Food Summit, and the Children Summits in 1990 and 2001.

Therefore, Rotary in its 100th year, pledges to continue its work end involvement: wherever possible and feasible, with the various bodies of the UN system, in social and humanitarian efforts.